PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE – A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO SELECTED COMPUTER SOFTWARE AND SERVICES COMPANIES IN KARNATAKA

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By

KULKARNI VIJAYALAXMI BALAKRISHNA
M.Com. M.Phil.

Under the Guidance of

Dr.P.S.YADIPADITHAYA
M.Com., Ph.D.

DEPARTMENT OF POST-GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN COMMERCE
MANGALORE UNIVERSITY,
MANGALAGANGOTRI-574 119

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INTRODUCTION

Technological breakthrough, women's entry into labour market, increase in nuclear and dual-earning families made the problems and prospects of work-life balance assume prominence more ever before.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Therefore, an attempt was made in this section to briefly explain the key concepts related to the topic, 'Problems and Prospects of Work-life Balance-A Study with Reference to Selected Computer Software and Services Companies in Karnataka' and their relationship to work-family conflict. Very important concepts of this study, especially independent variables are divided into four parts (three are in the forms of groups and another one is family-work conflict (dimension of bi-directional nature of work-family conflict). Group-1 comprised of organisational characteristics (supervisory satisfaction, compensation adequacy, and job security); group-2 included job characteristics (job autonomy, job feedback, task identity, task significance and skill variety); and group-3 involved individual characteristics (intrinsic motivation, professional identity, public service, self-regulation, professional autonomy, sense of calling, work ethic and leisure ethic) and fourth independent variable is family interfering with work (F→W) conflict. Work interfering with family (W→F) conflict was used as surrogate indicator of work-life balance and mediating/ moderating/ intervening variable between independent variables mentioned above (except family-work conflict) dependent/ job-related outcome variables (job satisfaction, organisational commitment, employee engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption) burnout (exhaustion and cynicism), and turnover intentions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

Further, work-life balance may not be directly measured and assessed as it is a relative concept and must be qualified by levels–high, moderate, low. Accordingly, more often than not, researchers will take recourse to 'work-family conflict' (W→FC) as a surrogate indicator of work-life balance.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions and research objectives were framed for the current research:

RQ-1: What are the major problems experienced by the software personnel in effectively balancing work and life spaces?

RQ-2: What is the extent to which are they able to successfully balance the demands of both work and life?

RQ-3: What are the causes and consequences of work-life imbalance/work-family conflict perceived and reported by the respondents?

RQ-4: What suggestions do these findings offer to organisations to effectively achieve work-life balance of the employees?

OBJECTIVES

The central purpose of this proposed research study is to examine and report on the trends, status and determinants of work-life balance perceived by the managers in the chosen computer software and services companies in Karnataka. The specific objectives will be:

1. To highlight the major problems or difficulties experienced by the software personnel in effectively balancing work and life spaces;
2. To understand the extent to which they are able to successfully balance the demands of both work and life;
3. To measure and assess the cause and consequences of work-life imbalance, especially work-and-family conflict;
4. To identify and discuss the key determinants of successful work-life balance strategies; and
5. To raise major organisational, managerial and individual level implications for improving work-life balance based on the findings of this proposed research study.

HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses related to independent variables and work-family conflict:

1. Organisational characteristics:

H_{1a}: The presence of supervisory satisfaction among employees reduces their perceptions of work-family conflict.

H_{1b}: The presence of compensation adequacy in an organisation reduces their perceptions of work-family conflict.

H_{1c}: The presence of job security in an organisation reduces employees' perceptions of work-family conflict.

2. Job Characteristics:

H_{2a}: The presence of autonomy in one's job decreases the perceptions of employees regarding work-family conflict.

H_{2b}: The presence of job characteristics of feedback decreases one's perceptions of work-family conflict.

H_{2c}: The job characteristic of task identity decreases employees' perceptions of work-family conflict.

H_{2d}: The job characteristic of task significance that employees experience in their jobs decreases of their perceptions of work-family conflict.

H_{2e}: The extent of skill variety that employees' possess increases their perceptions of work-family conflict.

3. Individual Characteristics:

H_3: The degree of intrinsic motivation among employees will increase the perceptions of work-family conflict.

H_{4a}: Preference of desire for professional autonomy in one's job will increase the perceptions of work-family conflict.

H_{4b}: The presence of sense of public service will increase the perceptions of work-family conflict.

H_{4c}: Level of self-regulation will decrease the perceptions of work-family conflict.

H_{4d}: Professional identification will increase the perceptions of work-family conflict.

H_{4e}: Sense of calling will increase perceptions of work-family conflict.

H_5: Work ethic will increase the perceptions of work-family conflict.

H_6: The presence of leisure ethic among employees reduces the perceptions of work-family conflict.

4. Family-work conflict

H_7: The presence of family-work conflict will increase work-family conflict.

Hypotheses related to dependent variables

H_8: Lower levels of perceptions of work-family conflict lead to increased levels of job satisfaction.

H_9: Lower levels of perceptions of work-family conflict lead to increased levels of organisational commitment.

H_{10}: Lower the levels of perceptions of work-family conflict lead to increased levels of employee engagement.

H_{11}: Lower levels of perceptions of work-family conflict lead to decreased levels of burnout.

H_{12}: Lower levels of perceptions of work-family conflict results in the reduction of turnover intentions.

CONTROL VARIABLES

The researcher controls for the influence of a number of demographic factors as well as the impact of work-related stressors and controls for the effect of job tenure on work-family conflict. In addition, there is control for a number of personal and family variables, including age gender, number of children living at home. Finally, the researcher implements a control factor that accounts for a variety of alternate sources of organisational stress, such as role ambiguity and work demands.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The following section describes the operational definitions of the various research constructs:

Independent variables: Constructs and sub-constructs

1. **Organisational characteristics**
    - **Supervisory satisfaction:** Superior satisfaction is the perception of the employee regarding the degree of respect, fair treatment, quality of supervision, supervisor support and guidance and the equality of inter-personal relationship and understanding with the supervisor that he or she (employee) is likely to experience.
    - **Compensation adequacy:** Compensation adequacy refers to the perceptions of an employee with regard to the adequacy of compensation that he or she gets in terms of its size relative to quantum of work and leave available in his or her job.
    - **Job security:** Job security is the confidence of an employee in a) the long tenure of his or her job, b) sense of self-control with regard to performance of job, c) faith in the organisation's willingness to offer an alternative job and d) in the security of job regardless of volatility in economic conditions.

2. **Job characteristics**
    - **Autonomy:** Autonomy is the extent to which one's job permits one to decide on his or her own to go about doing his or her work and thus provide one freedom to take personal initiative and judgment in carrying out his or her work.
    - **Job feedback:** Job feedback is the degree to which the job itself provides information about one's work performance and thus provides chances and clues with regard to his or her level of performance in the job he or she is doing.
    - **Task identity:** Task identity is the extent to which one's job involves a whole and identifiable piece of work and thus provides a chance to do either an entire piece of work or to finish completely the pieces of work that he or she begins.

- **Task significance:** Task significance is the perception of an employee with regard to its significance in terms of its effects on other people or from the viewpoint of its importance in the broader scheme of things relating to that work.
- **Skill variety:** Skill variety is the extent to which a job requires one to do many different things at work, using a variety of skills and talents including a number of complex or high level skills.

3. **Individual characteristics**
    - **Intrinsic motivation:** Intrinsic motivation is the state of mind in which one perceives positively about himself or herself and thus feels good and happy on discovering his or her good job performance.

Professionalism Variables

- **Professional autonomy:** Professional autonomy is said to exist in a job if an employee gets opportunities to exercise his or her own judgement so that his or her decisions are not subject to review by other people.
- **Professional identification:** Professional identification is said to exist among employees in terms of their propensities and actions with regard to the study of professional journals, attending professional meetings, and lending support to professional associates.
- **Public service:** Public service is the perceptions of an employee with regard to the essential and indispensable nature of his or her profession to society.
- **Self-regulation:** Self-regulation is the perception of the employee regarding the abilities of his or her peers to judge his or her competence and the extent of awareness present among fellow-workers with regard to each other's work.
- **Sense of calling:** Sense of calling is the degree of dedication, high level of idealism that an employee demonstrates which manifests itself in the form of presence of commitment to profession even in times of reduction of income originating from the same.
- **Work ethic:** Work ethic is the degree to which an employee stands on his or her own in the process of learning a job, in one's aspiration to remain independent in his or her life and in his or her aspiration to stand alone in order to put up superior performance.
- **Leisure ethic:** Leisure ethic refers to preference of an employee towards greater leisure and less work.

Family-work Conflict: Family-work conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in which the general demands of time devoted to, and strain created by the family interference with performing work-related responsibilities.

Mediating Variable

Work-family conflict: Work-family conflict refers to the perception of an employee relating to the experience of tiredness at home after the job, encroachment of work into personal space, and the expression of dislike by members of family towards work preoccupation at home.

Dependent Variables

- **Job satisfaction:** Job satisfaction is the overall positive feeling about the job and the specific positivity towards the specific work that one performs in a job.
- **Organisational commitment:** Organisational commitment is the degree of identification that an employee experiences with the organization and its values, the intensity of the experience of inspiration towards greater job performance and the performance for the current organization over other alternative organisations.
- **Employee engagement:** Employee engagement is positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption. Not being a momentary and specific state. Engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual or behaviour.
- **Burnout:** Job burnout is defined as "a syndrome of emotional exhaustion and cynicism that occurs frequently among individuals who do 'people-work' of some kind" Maslach, Jackson 1981.
- **Turnover intentions:** Turnover intentions refer to the degree of intensity of intentions, thoughts and efforts of an employee relating to finding a comparable job, exploring a new job or a different organisation with a sense of encouragement in the said process.

Professionals: Compared with other employees, professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills associated with specific discipline, and therefore, have also traditionally had more discretionary power/autonomy to make decisions in relation to the client (Dent, 2003). In addition, Friedson (2001) argues that not only does a professional demand autonomy and control in their work. Manager is considered as a professional and the above meaning represents the meaning of manager.

Work-life Balance

Work-life balance is the harmonious and holistic integration of work and non-work, so that men and women can achieve their potential across the domains of work, family, present life and community — in which they play out their life roles (Bailyn, Drogo, Koshan; 2001).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study utilised a quantitative approach and a disproportionate stratified random sampling survey research design to answer the proposed research questions. This study employed a pre-tested questionnaire (Michael and Dinger et al., 2010). It is an online survey of 405 respondents (effective response rate 72.57%) working for twelve computer software services companies situated in Bangalore. Data was processed by using SPSS 17.0 version. Statistical tools and techniques such as descriptive (mean and standard deviation), Pearson student correlation, and linear multiple regression and bootstrap analysis were performed to process data and time taken to complete this survey was 11 months *i.e.*, from January to November 2012.

INSTRUMENT

The questionnaire was organised in 11 sections. Section A and Section B belonged to Company, Demographic and Socio-economic profile. Section C to Section K concerned to organisational characteristics, job characteristics, individual characteristics, work-family conflict and family-work conflict and job-related outcome variables.

Job Diagnostic Survey (1996) and Hackman and Oldham's (1980) job characteristics model, Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian (1996), Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2002) and Maslach Burnout Inventory – General Survey (Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach and Jackson, 1996 models were used to measure three groups independent variables, work-family conflict and family-work conflict, employee engagement and burnout respectively. Questionnaire comprised of both open as well as closed ended questions.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

This study is carried out in computer software and services companies (CSSCs) and as such the findings of the study can be applicable to all CSSCs. The concept of work-life balance has been in news recently and much needs to be done. Socio-economic factors of managers of computer software and services companies were given nominal

importance. One would have got very precise results if an addition of qualitative data was made to the present study.

CHAPTER SCHEME

The present research study titled "Problems and prospects of work-life balance-A study with reference to selected computer software and services companies in Karnataka." Is coordinated in nine chapters as briefly outlined below:

Chapter-1: Introduction is meant for describing conceptual framework guiding the study, key research questions, hypotheses and objectives. Methodological issues pertaining to the sources of data, data collection instruments, tools and techniques of data analysis are also given in this chapter. Finally, the chapter highlights scope and limitations of the present research along with the chapter outline.

Chapter-2: Theoretical Background provides a thumb-nail sketch of work-life balance theories based on ideological underpinnings and a holistic context.

Chapter-3: Review of Literature offers an overview of previous research studies pertaining to the present field of investigation.

Chapter-4: Profile of Sample presents the organisational characteristics and socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Chapter-5: Work-Family Conflict: Measurement and Assessment presents the results and discussions pertaining to the antecedents of work-family conflict and job-related outcome variables of work-life balance as perceived and reported by the professionals.

Chapter-6: Work-life Balance: Key Determinants present positive aspects of measuring work-family conflict (variables which would reduce work-family conflict) and in turn, increase in work-life balance) and negative aspects of measuring work-family conflict (variables which would increase work-family conflict and in turn, decrease in work-life balance) by establishing the relationship between all the independent variables except family-work conflict and dependent variables with the mediation of work-family conflict.

Chapter-7: Summary and Conclusion presents a brief summary of major findings in this research; second, it deals with the important professional implications for enhancing work-life balance of the field of the professional practice; third, organisational and managerial implications for the professionals of the field and finally, the chapter concludes by providing directions for the extension of the current study into the future.

CHAPTER II-THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Work-family conflict is the result of spilling over of work obligations into one's family life. Work-family conflict is a specific type of spillover in which participation in the family realm is negatively impacted by work obligations. It has negative implications for individuals and organizations, such as job stress and intention to quit a job or leave the profession entirely.

To understand spillover's sources, organisational behaviour research suggests examining innate individual characteristics or defining characteristics of the work situation. A variety of research suggests that work experiences are shaped by the structure of work and individual characteristics. Studies of work family conflict have leveraged both the individual and situational approaches. Furthermore, equity theory provides a foundation explaining why individual perceptions of the work environment may influence the individual's reaction to the workplace. Taken together, an interactionist perspective suggests that factors such as stress, job performance, commitment and attitudes toward the work are outcomes of individual characteristics' interaction with the broader organisational environment. Within computer software and services companies literature, researchers have used the interactionist perspective to study how individual characteristics interact with organisational qualities to influence job-related outcome variables.

CHAPTER-III: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following table gives the summary of literature review.

Table-1: Foreign Studies

Year	Theme-wise			Total
	Work-Family Conflict	Work-Life Balance	Mixed	
1980	4	1	3	8
1990	5	2	3	10
2000	7	3	4	14
2010	50	12	16	78
2014	10	7	3	20
2015	2	--	--	2
2016	1	--	11	1
	79 (58%)	25 (20%)	29 (22%)	133

Table-2: Indian Studies

Year	Theme-Wise			Total
	Work-Family Conflict	Work-Life Balance	Mixed	
1980	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
1990	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
2000	Nil	Nil	1	1
2010	1	3	3	7
2014	3	7	2	12
2015	1	--	--	1
2016	1	--	--	1
	6 (27%)	10 (46%)	6 (27%)	22

Of the 155 research studies reviewed, 133 (86%) belonged to foreign countries. Indian research studies carried out in this domain accounted for only 14 per cent. Major journals which highlighted the theme of work-family conflict or work-life balance were Personnel Psychology, Journal of Organisational Behaviour, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Occupational Behaviour, Information & Management, Journal of Management work & stress, Journal of Vocational Behaviour, Human Relations, Organisational Behaviour and Human Decision Process, MIS Quarterly Executive, Personnel Review, Indian Journal of Industrial Relations.

Several studies have been conducted pertaining to work-family conflict abroad, but it remains as an under-research area in the Indian context, and more so in examining the problems and prospects of work-life balance from the point of view of computer software and services companies' workforce.

CHAPTER IV: SAMPLE PROFILE

This chapter dealt with sample profile. The companies' names were not disclosed according to the 'no information policy' of computer software and services sector.A significant majority of the respondents (78%) represented leading computer software and services companies in Karnataka. As many as 77 per cent worked for multinational companies and 62.5 per cent accounted for the matured age-group of 31-40 years. A little over 77 per cent were male managers, 76.5 per cent were married, nearly 67 per cent possessed graduate engineering qualification, a little over 63 per cent reported nuclear family structure, more than one-half claimed single-earner household status, a little over

45 per cent had the total work experience ranging from 7 to 10 years and among those married (76.5%), more than one-half (59.3%) reported the presence of children.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

CHAPTER V: Most of the managers experienced the presence of three organisational characteristics of their organisation such as supervisory satisfaction, compensation adequacy and job security to a higher extent. They also reported their perception to a moderate level of job characteristics such as autonomy, feedback, task identity, task significance and skill variety. They also reported their perception of moderate level of intrinsic motivation, high level of professional autonomy, public service, self-regulation, professional identification and sense of calling and work ethic and leisure ethic. They also experienced high level work-family conflict and family-work conflict at moderate level.

There was also the report of their perception regarding job satisfaction at moderate level, high level of organisational commitment and moderate level of employee engagement along with moderate level of exhaustion and high level cynicism and perception reported by the respondents about their intention to leave the organisation was also high.

Finally, there existed a negative correlation between job satisfaction and turnover intention, between organisational commitment and burnout; between organisational commitment and turnover intentions and between employee engagement and burnout, between employee engagement and turnover intention. There existed a positive correlation between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, between job satisfaction and employee engagement. Nearly 62 per cent of the managers had the intention to leave their present organisation in the near future. However, the findings revealed a negative relationship between the perceived W→FC of the managers and their perception of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and employee engagement.

After measuring and assessing the job attitudes of the managers, W→FC would be both a relevant and an interesting proposition to ascertain the major determinants of these job attitudes. This issue is addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI:

The main purpose of this chapter is to identify and discuss the major factors responsible for different levels of work-life balance experiences by the computer software

and services companies' professionals in Karnataka. The following five sections would produce results, discussions and inferences pertaining to the key determinants of work-life balance.

SECTION-A

Internal Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extract and Construct Correlations

In this Internal composite reliability and average are related and most of the items load highly on the construct (average) and most of the items correlated with each other, especially employee engagement, burnout and turnover intentions (less are feedback, intrinsic motivation and public service, *i.e.*, load is less than 0.5).

SECTION-B

The results of regression analysis were examined at four levels: 'not significant' (**ns**=p>.05), 'significant' (**sig**=p<0.05), 'highly significant' (**hs**=p<0.01), and 'very highly significant' (**vhs**=p<.001).

Group-1: Of the three organisational characteristics, job security did seem to influence work-family conflict (W→FC) perceptions negatively and significantly but not other two variables supervisory satisfaction and compensation adequacy. Group-2: Of the five variables of job characteristics, job autonomy and task significance significantly effected perceived W→FC but not the remaining three variables (feedback, task identity and skill variety).

Group-3: Of the eight individual characteristics, *i.e.*, professional autonomy and leisure ethic showed their impact on perceived work-family conflict.

For indepth analysis, the researcher conducted multiple regression analysis separately for five variables reflecting professionalism. On the strength of those results, it could be reported that professional autonomy and self-regulation could significantly affect perceived W→FC but not other three variables of professionalism public service, professional identification and sense of calling.

SECTION-C

Determinants of Work-family Conflict: Multiple Regression Analysis Test of Significance for Individual Variable's Effect of Each Group

The researcher tested each individual variable's effect on work-family conflict (W→FC) perceptions of three groups of independent variables.

Group-1: Alike combined effect of organisational characteristics, individually also job security again emerged as dominating variable in influencing perceived W→FC

Group 2: The results suggested that there was a negative and significant relationship between all the job characteristics and perceived work-family conflict (W→FC): job autonomy, feedback, task identity, task significance, and skill variety.

Group- 3: There was a negative and significant impact of intrinsic motivation on work-family conflict (W→FC) perception. Professional autonomy and professional identification positively and significantly changed the perception of W→FC.Work ethic and leisure ethic exerted their positive and significant impact on perceived W→FC.

Predictor 4 – family-work conflict significantly influenced work-family conflict.

SECTION-D: Work-family Conflict (W→FC) and Job-related Outcome Variables

The researcher tested the effect of work-family conflict (W→FC) perception on job-related outcomes such as job satisfaction (JSN), employee engagement (EE), and burnout (BO).Work-family conflict was negatively influenced job satisfaction (JSN) and employee engagement and burnout positively.

SECTION-E: Mediation effects and the status of work-life balance

Baron and Kenny (1986) guidelines were used to analyse the results of mediational effect with bootstrap approach. The following table gives the summarised picture of these results.

Table-1: Summary of the results

Input	Transformation Process		Output	Outcome
	Work-family (W↔F) Conflict as surrogate indicator and mediating variable of work-life (W↔L) balance		Work-life Balance	Job-related Outcome Variables
Organisational Characteristics	**Direct Effects**	**Mediational Effects**		
Supervisory Satisfaction		1% ↓ (-) 1% ↓ (-) 1% ↓ (-)	1% ↑ (+) 1% ↑ (+) 1% ↑ (+)	1% Job satisfaction (+) 1% Employee Engagement (+) 1% Burnout (-)
Compensation Adequacy		1% ↑ (+) 1% ↑ (+)	1% ↓ (-) 1% ↓ (-)	1% Job Satisfaction (-) 1% Employee Engagement (-)
Job Security	42% ↓ (-)	11% ↓ (-) 16% ↓ (-) 11% ↓ (-)	11% ↑ (+) 16% ↑ (+) 11% ↑ (+)	11% Job satisfaction (+) 16% Employee engagement(+) 11% Burnout (-)
Job Characteristics	47% ↓ (-)	17% ↓ (-)	17% ↑ (+)	17% Employee Engagement (+)
Job Autonomy		9% ↓ (-)	9% ↑ (+)	9% Burnout (-)
Feedback	32% ↓ (-)	7% ↓ (-) 6% ↓ (-) 7% ↓ (-)	7% ↑ (+) 6% ↑ (+) 7% ↑ (+)	7% Job satisfaction (+) 6% Employee engagement (+) 7% Burnout (-)
Task Identity	30% ↓ (-)	8% ↓ (-)	8% ↑ (+)	8% Employee Engagement (+)
Task Significance	39% ↓ (-)	12% ↓ (-)	12% ↑ (+)	12% Job Satisfaction (+)
Skill Variety	2.6% ↓ (-)	4% ↓ (-)	4% ↑ (+)	4% Job satisfaction (+)
Individual characteristics				
Intrinsic motivation	32% ↓ (-)	8 % ↓ (-) 6% ↓ (-)	8% ↑ (+) 6% ↑ (+)	8% Job Satisfaction (+) 6% Employee Engagement (+)
Professional Autonomy	38% ↑ (+)	13% ↓ (-)	13% ↑ (+)	13% Burnout (-)
Public service		2% ↑ (+)	2% ↓ (-)	2% Employee Engagement (-)
Self-regulation		11% ↓ (-) 2% ↑ (+)	11% ↑ (+) 2% ↓ (-)	11% Employee Engagement (+) 2% Burnout (+)
Professional Identification	17% ↑ (+)	3% ↓ (-)	3% ↑ (+)	3% Burnout (-)
Sense of calling		2 % ↓ (-)	2% ↑ (+)	2% Employee Engagement (+)
Work ethic	19% ↑ (+)	3% ↓ (-)	3% ↑ (+)	3% Burnout (-)
Leisure ethic	39% ↑ (+)	7% ↓ (-)	7% ↑ (+)	7% Employee Engagement (+)
	39% ↑ (+)	9% ↓ (-)	9% ↑ (+)	9% Burnout (-)

In the mediation test also job security emerged as key determinant of work-life balance. Because it reduced W→FC/ increased W→LB and in turn, increased the level of job satisfaction, employee engagement and decreased burnout. Other two variables (especially, compensation adequacy) increased W→FC/ decreased W→LB, in turn, decrease in job satisfaction and employee engagement, but the effect was very low. It indicated the presence of some 'unknown' variables. Supervisory satisfaction decreased

W→FC/ increased W→LB, and in turn, increased job satisfaction, employee engagement and decreased burnout, but very low, degree of variation was found.

With this analysis, it could be suggested that lack of job security may create problem to the professionals in effectively balancing their work and family demands. Thus, RQ-1 was answered, "What are the major problems experienced by the software personnel in effectively balancing their work and life spaces? This analysis also enabled the researcher to achieve objective-1 "to highlight the major problems or difficulties experienced by the software personnel in effectively balancing their work and life spaces" and test the hypothesis H_{1c}.

2. Job characteristics and W→FC (RQ-2; Objective-2; and H_{2a}, H_{2b} and H_{2d})

In the same time, the findings of this research proved that all job characteristics (job autonomy, feedback, task identity, task significance and skill variety) would reduce work-family conflict. Skill variety also decreased work-family conflict level but adverse to the hypothesis, hence, H_{2e} was rejected. Job autonomy and feedback were able to decrease burnout with the mediation of work-family conflict. Hence, there was increase in work-life balance. Similarly, feedback, task significance and skill variety increased job satisfaction. It means, they reduced work-family conflict/ increased work-life balance. Feedback and task identity increased employee engagement by reducing the level of work-family conflict/ increasing the level of work-life balance. This analysis helped the researcher to answer RQ-2 'What is the extent to which are they able to successfully balance the demands of both work and life?', achieved objective-2 'to understand the extent to which they are able to successfully balance the demands of both work and life' and test H_{2a} 'The presence of autonomy in one's job decreases the perceptions of employees regarding work-family conflict', H_{2b} 'The presence of job characteristics of feedback decreases one's perceptions of work-family conflict', H_{2c} 'The job characteristic of task identity decreases employees' perceptions of work-family conflict' and H_{2d} 'The job characteristic of task significance that employees experience in their jobs decreases their perceptions of work-family conflict'.

The present research findings confirmed that software professionals work-life balance would be better if they have freedom to take personal initiative and decision-making authority. Feedback might have enabled them to clearly understand their level of task performance. Task identity and task significance might be intrinsically motivated them as their job was very significant and useful to society at large. Meaningful work

requires greater skill varieties and higher skill requirement that make the work more interesting. All the variables of job characteristics may increase the ability of professional of software sector to balance work and life spaces successfully.

3. Individual Characteristics and Work-Family Conflict (RQ-3 & 4; Obj 3 & 4; and H_{4a}, H_{4d}, H_5, H_6, H_7, H_8, H_{10} and H_{11})

Individual characteristics, especially professional autonomy reduced burnout level to a greater extent when compared to other (self-regulation, work ethic and leisure ethic). It would reduce work-family conflict/ increased work-life balance. Self-regulation increased employee engagement to a greater extent than intrinsic motivation, leisure ethic, public service and sense of calling with the mediation of work-family conflict. Employee engagement increased work-life balance.

Job satisfaction increased with support of intrinsic motivation even there was the presence of work-family conflict between these two variables. No other variables linked with job satisfaction with the mediation of work-family conflict and there was no connection with any individual variables and job-related outcome variables (organisational commitment and turnover intentions).

4. Family-work (F→W) Conflict and Work-family (W→F) Conflict

Family-work conflict increased the perceptions of work-family conflict. On the basis of these findings, it could be suggested that software sector may improve the level of employee engagement and job satisfaction level and decrease the influence of burnout level, and simultaneously, improving W→LB/ decreasing W→FC. Thus, the researcher answered RQ-4 'What suggestions do these findings offer to organisations to effectively achieve work-life balance of the employees?' and accomplished objective-4 'to identify and discuss the key determinants of successful work-life balance strategies' and 5 'to raise major organisational, managerial and individual level implications for improving work-life balance based on the findings of this proposed research study' and tested H_8 'Lower levels of perceptions of work-family conflict lead to increased levels of job satisfaction', H_{10} 'Lower the levels of perceptions of work-family conflict lead to increased levels of employee engagement' and H_{11} 'Lower levels of perceptions of work-family conflict lead to decreased levels of burnout').

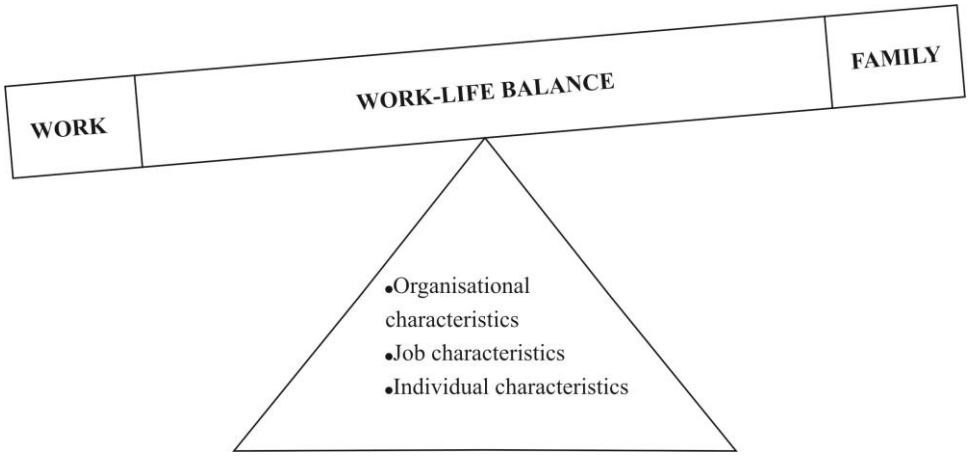
SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

This study may suggest them to form family-responsive strategies (family-work conflict was the major cause) which could yield benefits to the companies in the form of increased job satisfaction employee engagement and decreased burnout.

In this manner, this study answered the RQ-4: what suggestions do these findings offer organisations to effectively achieve work-life balanceof the employees; objectives 4 and 5: to identity and discuss the key determinants of successful work-life balance strategies; and to raise major organisational managerial and individual level implications for improving work-life balance based on the findings of this proposed research study and tested hypothesis 6, 8, 10 and 11 of this study. Figure-1 would produce the relationships between key determinants of successful work-life balance and their impact on job-related outcome variables with the surrogate indicator of work-family conflict.

Computer software and services firm's cannot change individual characteristics, but it can formulate strategies to bring change in organisational characteristics and job characteristics to suit and solve to the problems of professionals regarding work-family conflict. If neglected, organisational and job characteristics (above-discussed) may become hurdle, if cared may become boon. Job characteristics may be either perceived as desirable or threatening depending upon the growth-need strength (Hackman and Associates, 1975). It is possible that some respondents with low growth-need would find high task significant, task identity and autonomy as unwanted or threatening and perceive their task as less meaningful as a result.

Figure-1: Seesaw of work-life balance



Work-life is positioned at the one end of the seesaw, while family life is located at the other end. Various organisational, job and individual characteristics of the computer

software and services professionals act as the 'fulcrum' supporting the seesaw. If there is some pressure on the work-life, family life is disturbed in the more than proportionate manner due to the leverage effect. Work-life balance is achieved and maintained with the help of a fixed 'fulcrum'. Imbalance in work-life is mainly due to work-family conflict.

Implications

Computer software and services firms are operating in a highly complex, competitive, dynamic and turbulent business environment. Due to the nature of work, job demands, uncertainty in the workplace environment and more mental involvement will make these professionals prone to high levels of work-family conflict emerging from both the directions: work interfering with family and family interfering with work conflict. More often than not, the typical workplace culture and climate make these computer software and services professionals 'workaholic' with concomitant consequences like excessive stress and strains, family disorders, anxiety, sense of guilt, frustration and depression. In this context, work and family conflict/ work-life imbalance emerges as a 'professional hazard' or a necessary evil for them. Organisations should focus on organisational, job and individual characteristics of these software professionals to enhance the prospects of maintaining healthy and delicate balance between work and family domains. Under such circumstances, these professionals will be in a position to strengthen their physical, mental, intellectual, social and spiritual well-being and contribute immensely to the overall progress of their organisations.

Directions for Future Research

The limitations inherent to this kind of research study can be viewed as opportunities for further research in this field. Accordingly, a few directions for future research are indicated below:

- Replicate the same study in other industrial sectors to explore new challenges and directions for managing work-family conflict/ work-life balance.
- Cross-national study may be conducted to understand the cross-cultural implications and challenges of work-life balance between India and UK/ USA, for example.
- Detailed case study investigation may be carried out to understand the gender-sensitivity between men and women in balancing work and family issues, obligations and challenges.
- Future research may examine the role and relevance of family-friendly human resource management policies and family-supportive work culture in reducing work-

family conflict (work interfering with family and family interfering with work conflict) and improving work-life balance.

- It would be both relevant and interesting to examine the contributory causes and consequences of increasing attrition rates in the software sector especially among women, rising divorce cases, and the instances of suicides with a view to designing, developing and implementing more innovative, inclusive and gender-specific human resource management strategies.

CONCLUSION:

Problems and prospects are just like two sides of the same coin (work-life balance). Work-family conflict projects the darker side and work-life balance reflects the brighter side of work-family interface. Unlike other sectors, computer software and services professionals come to terms with several job-related challenges and family problems due to the complex demanding nature of their profession. Continuous interaction with computers, software, smart phones and other electronic gadgets; tough deadlines of the projects; limited free time available to meet personal, social and family obligations; frequent travel to far-off destinations and self-imposed compulsions to survive, grow and excel in their profession might create work-family conflict and the adverse consequences arising there from in the forms of distress, strains and eventual burnout. However, innovative and enlightened organisations strive hard by implementing family-friendly policies and family-supportive work culture in order to reduce the perception of work-family conflict and to enhance the experience of better work-life balance.

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